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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [VE](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - CHAVEZ'S REGIONAL INFLUENCE

¶1. On October 21, conservative, influential, newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (Sun. circ. 260,108) carried a column by Andres Oppenheimer entitled "Hugo Chavez' Project in the Continent."
Quote:

¶2. "It is no mystery that Hugo Chavez...wants to destabilize Latin American countries that have good relations with the United States. He openly states it on an internet webpage of the Ministry of Communications.... Chavez is following in Fidel Castro's footsteps, creating artificial conflicts with internal 'enemies' to build a global cause and use them as a justification to remain in power forever. The difference is that unlike Castro... Chavez has tons of money. But what bothers me the most is that the United States is financing his efforts.... With its absurdly large use of unnecessary fuel, the United States is paying Chavez US\$34 billion for oil each year. As long as the United States continues to pay that fortune, Chavez will continue to have all the money in the world to finance 'alternative movements' in countries that have good relations with the United States."

URBAN